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## News Release

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### **Interior Releases Blueprint for Responsible Development in Moab**

*Planning Effort Underscores Landscape-Level Approach to  
Minimize Conflicts and Facilitate Responsible Development*

**MOAB, Utah**— The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Canyon Country District today released a proposed plan designed to guide mineral development in and around Moab, Utah while also protecting important cultural and recreational sites. The Moab Master Leasing Plan and Proposed Resource Management Plan Amendments/ Final Environmental Impact Statement (MLP/FEIS) are the culmination of a significant effort by the BLM and interested members of the public, community stakeholders and other local, state, and federal partners to provide for responsible development and conservation in the area.

“The proposed plan takes a landscape-level approach to balancing the protection of the iconic scenery in and around Moab and access to the rich energy resources found there,” said Secretary Jewell. “As the first Master Leasing Plan in Utah, the collaborative process that led to the proposed plan should serve as a model for how communities can work together to balance development with the protection of world-class environmental, cultural and recreational resources.”

The Moab Master Leasing Plan (MLP) planning area covers nearly 785,000 acres of public lands in Utah’s Grand and San Juan counties. Diverse land uses in the planning area include recreation, oil and gas production, mining, and grazing. The area is also home to the iconic Arches and Canyonlands National Parks, as well as BLM-managed public lands that hold spectacular red rock landscapes and unique geologic features. More than two million visitors recreate in the area each year, benefitting local economies and supporting hundreds of jobs and businesses. The planning area also contains a rich archaeological record of the Ancestral Puebloans who once called it home. The invaluable cultural resources left in the area hold their history and tell the story of the first farmers in the region.

“Balance is essential,” said BLM Director Neil Kornze. “In this plan we make sure that southern Utah’s energy resources can be responsibly accessed while also ensuring that Moab’s recreation economy can continue to flourish.”

The Moab MLP is an example of the success of the oil and gas leasing reform initiative launched by the BLM in 2010 which called for the development of MLPs to provide a framework for determining which areas are appropriate for oil and gas leasing and development. The Moab MLP reflects the balance and benefit of both recreation and the mineral and commodity extraction industry. Diverse recreational activities on BLM-managed lands in Utah provided \$460 million in local and national economic benefits in 2014; oil, gas and coal activities on BLM-managed lands in Utah provided \$981 million in local and national economic benefits during the same time period.

MLPs were launched by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in May 2010 as part of a sweeping oil and gas leasing reform initiative to address a leasing system that was close to the breaking point with nearly half of all proposed parcels receiving community protests and a substantial proportion resulting in litigation. The plans establish a framework for determining which areas are appropriate for responsible exploration and development of oil and gas resources while protecting the area's conservation resources. The reforms were designed to encourage stakeholder input early in the planning process, which reduces protests and litigation and provides developers with greater certainty. MLPs also provide direction for resolving resources conflicts, protecting important conservation resources, supporting outdoor recreation and other activities that benefit local communities and public land visitors.

The proposed Moab MLP and associated final environmental impact statement exemplifies the thoughtful planning and intensive analysis that can be achieved through a robust and collaborative process. In crafting the Moab MLP, the BLM brought together a diverse set of stakeholders, including local community members, industry representatives, recreation enthusiasts, tribes and other interested parties from across the country. The BLM also worked closely with the National Park Service, Environmental Protection Agency and other state and local agencies in the planning process. The BLM also solicited public feedback on preliminary alternatives and held public meetings. The proposed plan was developed after careful consideration of the more than 28,000 public comments received.

Copies of the Final EIS are available online (<http://go.usa.gov/xcbEh>) and will ultimately be available at the BLM Utah State Office in Salt Lake City, the Canyon Country District Office in Moab, and the Monticello Field Office in Monticello. The Notice of Availability will publish in the Federal Register on July 22, 2016, and will start a 30-day public protest period and 60-day Governor's consistency review. Additional information and review instructions are in the Dear Reader letter on the website. Further information is available from MLP Project Manager Brent Northrup, at the BLM Canyon Country District Office, by calling (435) 259-2100.

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